

THE ESSENCE OF BHAGAVAD GITA

**42 VERSES SELECTED BY
BHAGAVAN
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**WITH THE COMMENTARY OF
JAGADGURU
SRI ADI SANKARACHARYA**

INVOCATION
THE LORD WHO, SEATED ON HIS
CHARIOT,
REMOVED THE AFFLICTIONS OF ARJUNA,
MAY HE PROTECT US!

Arjuna's weakness condemned by the Lord.

सञ्जय उवाच —

तं तथा कृपयाऽऽविष्टमश्रुपूर्णकुलेक्षणम् ।

विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥

Samjaya said :

To him who was thus overcome with pity and afflicted, and whose eyes were full of tears and agitated, the destroyer of Madhu spoke as follows :

The body and the soul.

That Prakriti which is composed of the three *gunas* transforms itself into all objective forms, such as the bodies (*karya*), the senses (*karana*), and sense-objects (*vishaya*), and is combined into various aggregates of the body and the senses, to subserve the two ends of Purusha or Spirit, *viz.*, enjoyment and liberation. Such an aggregate is this, our body. In reference to this body, the Lord says :

श्रीभगवानुवाच :—

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥

The Blessed Lord said :

This, the body, O son of Kunti, is called Kshetra ; him who knows it, they who know of them call Kshetragna.

In the words 'the body' the Lord specifies the thing referred to by the pronoun 'this.' *Kshetra*—the field, the body, matter—is so called because it is shielded from injury, or because it is destructible, or because it is liable to decay, or because the fruits of actions are reaped in it as in a field. This body is designated as 'Kshetra,' 'the field' 'matter.' He who knows this Kshetra, *i.e.*, he who comprehends it in understanding from head to foot, He who perceives it as distinct from himself by knowledge, natural or imparted by others,—him they designate as *Kshetrajna*, 'the knower of the field,' 'the comprehender of matter,'—they who know of Kshetra and Kshetrajna.

Identity of the soul with the Lord.

Thus Kshetra and Kshetrajna have been described.—Is this all the knowledge that one has to acquire about them?—No Listen :

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥

And do thou also know Me as Kshetrajna in all Kshetras, O Bharata. The knowledge of Kshetra and Khetrajna is deemed by Me as *the* knowledge.

Do thou also know the Kshetrajna, described above, to be Myself, to be the Supreme Lord, not a being of the world (*samsara*). The meaning is this :—The Kshetrajna who is in all Kshetras, and who is differentiated by the manifold upadhis or Kshetras, from Brahma down to a clump of grass,

is, you should understand, really devoid of all the various upadhis (conditions) and is inaccessible to any such word or thought as 'sat' or 'asat,' existent or non-existent. As nothing else remains to be known apart from the true nature of Kshetra, Kshetrajna and the Isvara, that knowledge by which the two objects of knowledge, Kshetra and Kshetrajna, are known is considered by Me—the Lord, Vishnu—to be the right knowledge.

Now, listen to this, in the first place :

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभुताशयस्थितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥

I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the heart of all beings ; I am the beginning and the middle, as also the end, of all beings.

Granting that the Self—of whom we are speaking—is, according to the popular view, again and again born whenever a body comes into existence, and again and again dead whenever the body dies,—even if the Self were so, as you think, O mighty-armed, you ought not to grieve thus ; for, death is inevitable to what is born ; and birth is inevitable to what is dead.

Accordingly,

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।

तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

To that which is born, death is indeed certain ; and to that which is dead, birth is certain. Wherefore, about the unavoidable thing, thou

oughtst not to grieve.

To that which has had birth, death happens without failure, and birth is sure to happen to that which is dead. Since birth and death are unavoidable, therefore you ought not to grieve regarding such an unavoidable thing. If death is natural to that which has had birth, and if birth is natural to that which has had death, the thing is unavoidable. Regarding such an unavoidable thing you ought not to grieve.

The Self is immutable

How is the Self immutable?—This is answered by the next verse .

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-
न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

He is not born, nor does He ever die ; after having been, He again ceases not to be ; nor the reverse. Unborn, eternal, unchangeable and primeval, He is not slain when the body is slain.

He is not born ; no such change of condition as birth takes place in the Self. Nor does He die ; this denies the last change of condition called death. —‘ Ever ’ should be construed with the denial of every change, thus : He is never born, never dies, and so on.—For, the Self, having once existed does not afterwards cease to be any more. In ordinary parlance he is said to die who, having once existed, after-

wards ceases to be. Neither does the Self come into existence, like the body, having not existed before. Wherefore He is unborn. For, he is said to be born who, having not existed, comes into existence. Not so is the Self. Wherefore He is unborn. And because He does not die, He is eternal. [Though, by the denial of the first and the last changes, all changes have been denied, yet it is thought necessary to directly deny the intermediate changes, in the words 'unchangeable,' etc., so as to imply the absence of all such changes of condition as motion, though not specified here.] He is unchangeable: He is constant, not subject to the changes of condition known as decline (*apakshaya*.) Having no parts, He does not diminish in His own substance. As devoid of qualities, He does not diminish by loss of a quality. He is primeval, not subject to the change known as growth (*vridhhi*) as opposed to decline. For, that which increases in size by the accretion of parts is said to grow and to be renewed. As devoid of parts, the Self was as fresh in the past (as He is now or will be in future ; *i.e.*, He is ever the same); He never grows. And He is not slain when the body is slain : He is not transformed when the body is transformed. To avoid tautology, slaying is interpreted to mean transformation : the Self is not subject to transformation.

This verse teaches the absence in the Self of the six* *bhava-vikaras*,—of the six *vikaras* or changes of condition to which all *bhavas* or beings in the world are subject. The passage, on the whole, means that the Self is devoid of all sorts of change.

* Such as birth, existence, growth, transformation, decline, and destruction.

Wherefore,

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्वेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥

He cannot be cut, nor burnt, nor wetted, nor dried up. He is everlasting, all-pervading stable, firm, and eternal.

Because the mutually destructive objects—namely, swords and the like—cannot destroy the Self, therefore He is everlasting. Because everlasting, He is all-pervading. Because all-pervading, He is stable like a pillar. Because stable, the Self is firm. Wherefore He is eternal, not produced out of any cause, not new.

No charge of tautology can be brought against the verses (ii. 21-24) on the ground that in (ii. 20) the eternality and the immutability of the Self have been taught and that what has been said regarding the Self in these verses (ii. 21-24) adds nothing to what was taught in that one verse,—something being repeated verbatim, and something more being repeated in idea. Since the Self is a thing very difficult to understand, the Lord Vasudeva again and again introduces the subject and describes the same thing in other words, so that in some way or other the truth may be grasped by the intellect of the mortals (*samsârins*) and thus the cessation of their *samsâra* may be brought about.

What, then, is that which is ever real ? Listen :—

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥

But know that to be imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of That, the Inexhaustible.

Unlike the unreal, That—you must understand—does not vanish ; That, the Brahman, the ' Sat ', the Real, by which all this world, including the akasa, is pervaded, just as pots and other objects are pervaded by the akasa or space. Brahman does not undergo increase or diminution and is therefore inexhaustible. This Brahman, the ' Sat ', is not exhausted in Itself ; for, unlike the body It has no parts. Nor does It diminish by (loss of) anything belonging to It ; for, nothing belongs to the Self. Devadatta, for instance, is ruined by loss of wealth ; but Brahman does not suffer loss in that way. Wherefore, nobody can bring about the disappearance or destruction of the inexhaustible Brahman. Nobody—not even the Isvara, the Supreme Lord—can destroy the Self. For, the Self is Brahman Itself and one cannot act upon oneself.

The Real and the Unreal.

For the following reason also it is proper that thou shouldst abandon grief and distressful delusion and calmly endure heat and cold, etc. For,

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥

Of the unreal no being there is ; there is no non being of the real. Of both these is the truth seen by the seers of the Essence.

There is no bhâva—no being, no existence—of the unreal (asat) such as heat and cold as well as their causes. Heat cold, etc., and the causes thereof, which are (no doubt) perceived through the organs of perception, are not absolutely real (vastu-sat) ; for they are effects or changes (vikâra), and every change is temporary. For instance, no objective form, such as an earthen pot, presented to consciousness by the eye, proves to be real, because it is not perceived apart from clay. Thus every effect is unreal, because it is not perceived as distinct from its cause. Every effect, such as a pot, is unreal, also because it is not perceived before its production and after its destruction. * And likewise the cause, such as clay, is unreal because it is not perceived apart from its cause. †

* Cp. 'Whatever exists not in the beginning or in the end exists not really in the present.' (Gandapâdakarikas on the Mandukya-upanishad. IV, 31).—(A).

† This implies that the Absolute Reality is not conditioned by causality ; and therefore the perception of the series of causes and effects must be illusory.—(A).

This conclusion—that the real is ever existent and the unreal is never existent—regarding the two, the Self and the non-Self, the real and the unreal, is always present before the minds of those who attend only to truth, to the real nature of the Brahman, the Absolute, the All, 'That.' Thou hadst therefore better follow the view of such truth-seers, shake off grief and delusion, and, being assured that all phenomena (vikâras) are really non-existent and are, like the mirage, mere false appearances, do thou calmly bear heat and cold and

other pairs of opposites, of which some are constant and others inconstant in their nature as productive of pleasure or pain.

The Self illumines all.

Moreover,

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥

As the one sun illumines all this world, so does the embodied One, O Bharata, illumines all bodies.

The embodied one (Kshetrin), the Supreme Self (Paramatman), is one and illumines all bodies, the whole material being (Kshetra), from the Avyakta (the unmanifested material cause of the universe) down to the unmoving objects, from the 'Great Elements' down to 'firmness' (xiii. 5-6 .—The illustration by means of the sun serves here a double purpose with reference to the Self,—showing that, like the sun, the Self is *One* only in all bodies, and that like the sun He is unsoiled.

The Goal is the Lord's Glorious Being.

The Goal is again specified thus :

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।

यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥

That the sun illumines not, nor the moon, nor fire ; That is My Supreme Abode, to which having gone none return.

The sun, though possessed of the power of illumining all, does not illumine that Abode, the Abode of Light. That Abode to which having gone none return, and which the sun and other (luminous bodies) do not illumine, is the Highest Abode of Vishnu.

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥

What is called the Unmanifested and the Imperishable, That, they say, is the highest goal ; which having reached none return. That is My highest place.

That : that Avyakta which is called Akshara, the Imperishable, the Unmanifested Being. Having reached that state, none has returned to *samsara*, the mundane life. That is My (*i.e.*, Vishnu's) Supreme Abode.

The Path to the Goal.

What sort of persons reach that Goal ?—Listen :

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषाः

अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।

द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-

र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥

Free from pride and delusion, with the evil of attachment conquered, ever dwelling in the Self, their desires having completely turned away, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach that Goal Eternal.

Let the Law guide thy Life.

The scripture (sastra) is the authority on which all this renunciation of asuric nature and the observance of what is good are based. One would engage in these only on the authority of the scriptures (sastra), not otherwise. Therefore,

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥

He who, neglecting the scriptural ordinance, acts under the impulse of desire, attains not perfection, nor happiness, nor the Supreme Goal.

The one Self in all.

It has been said (xiii. 23) that the effect of right knowledge is the cessation of births through the removal of avidya (nescience) and the like* which form the seed of samsara. It has also been said that the cause of birth is the union of Kshetra and Kshetrajna caused by avidya. Therefore, the right knowledge which alone can remove avidya, though already described, will again be described in other words as follows :

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।

विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥

He sees who sees the Supreme Lord, remaining the same in all beings, the undying in the dying.

The Supreme Lord exists, without any difference, in all living beings, from Brahma down to the unmoving object (sthavara). He is the Lord Supreme as compared with the

body, senses, Manas, Buddhi, the Avyakta (the unmanifested, i.e., the causal body, the kârana-sarira, avidya) and the individual soul (Atman, Jiva). All living beings are perishable while the Supreme Lord is imperishable. Thus there is a great disparity between the Supreme Lord and the created beings. For, of all changing states of a being (bhava-vikaras), the change of state called birth is the root ; all the other changes ending with destruction occur subsequently to birth. There can be no change of state subsequent to destruction, since the object itself does not exist. Attributes can exist only when the substance exists. Wherefore, the denial of the final change of state comprehends the denial of all the preceding changes as well as their effects. Thus it may be seen that the Supreme Lord is quite unlike all beings and that He is one and immutable in all. He sees (rightly) who sees the Supreme Lord as now described.

How canst Thou be seen ?—Listen :

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप ॥ ५४ ॥

But by undistracted devotion can I, of this Form, be known and seen in reality, and entered into, O harasser of thy foes.

Undistracted devotion (Bhakti): that devotion which never seeks any other object except the Lord, and in virtue of which no object other than Vasudeva is cognised by any of the senses. *Of this Form*: of the Universal Form. By this sort of devotion it is possible not only to know Me as declared in the sastras, but also to intuitively realise Me as I am, and to enter into Me, i.e., to obtain liberation.

As to this threefold Faith,

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥

The faith of each is in accordance with his nature, O Bharata. The man is made up of his faith ; as a man's faith is, so is he.

Each : every living being. *Nature* (Sattva) : the antah-karana with its specific tendencies or samskara. *Man* : Jiva, samsarin. *So* : in accordance with that faith.

The surest means to wisdom.

The surest means of acquiring wisdom is taught as follows :

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥

He obtains wisdom who is full of faith, who is devoted to it, and who has subdued the senses. Having obtained wisdom, he speedily attains to the Supreme Peace.

A man full of faith obtains wisdom. But he may be slow ; whence it is enjoined that he should ever be intently devoted to the means of obtaining wisdom, such as constant attendance on the Teachers (Gurus)*. A man of faith and devotion may not have mastery over the senses ; whence it is also enjoined that he should withdraw his senses away from their engrossment in objects. Such a man of faith, devotion and self-control is sure to obtain wisdom. Mere external acts (iv. 35), such as long prostration before the Guru, may fail to

* And listening to their teachings, etc,

produce the required effect, since they may be tinged with hypocrisy. But hypocrisy is impossible when a man is full of faith and so on. Whence these are the certain means of acquiring wisdom.—What is the result of this acquisition of wisdom?—The answer follows: Having obtained wisdom, he swiftly attains the Supreme Peace, called Moksha. That the right knowledge quickly leads to moksha is an established truth clearly taught by all sastras as well as reason.

The Lord endows His devotees with wisdom.

As to those who worship Me devoutly in the ways mentioned above,

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

To these, ever devout, worshipping Me with love, I give that devotion of knowledge by which they come to Me.

To them who are ever devout, worshipping Me, not for any purpose of their own, but out of love for Me.—to them I give that devotion of right knowledge (buddhi-yoga) of My essential nature by which they* those who worship Me “with their thought on Me” (x. 9) and so on—know Me, the Supreme Lord, the Self, as their own Self.

Why dost Thou give the devotion of knowledge (buddhi-yoga) to Thy devotees?—And what is that obstacle in the path leading to Thee which the devotion of knowledge that Thou givest to Thy devotees serves to remove?—In answer to this question, the Lord says :

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥

Out of mere compassion for them, I, abiding in their self, destroy the darkness born of ignorance, by the luminous lamp of wisdom.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।

तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥

But to those whose unwisdom is destroyed by wisdom of the Self, like the sun wisdom illuminates that Supreme.

When that unwisdom by which the mortals are enveloped and deluded is destroyed by wisdom or discriminative knowledge of the Self, then, as the sun illuminates all objects, so wisdom illuminates the whole of the Knowable, the Supreme Reality.

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥

They say that the senses are superior ; superior to the senses is mind ; superior to mind is reason ; one who is even superior to reason is He.

The senses are five, the sense of bearing, etc. When compared with the physical body, which is gross, external, and limited, the senses are superior as they are comparatively more subtle and internal, and have a more extensive sphere of action. So say the wise. Superior to the senses is mind (manas, the impulsive nature) which is composed of thoughts

and desires, of errors and doubts, (sankalpa and vikalpa), Superior to mind is reason (buddhi) characterized by determination (nischaya). So, He who is behind all things visible, inclusive of reason, the Dweller in the body, whom—it has been said—desire, seated in the senses and other quarters, bewilders by enveloping wisdom,—He, the Self, the witness of reason, is superior to reason.

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥

Then knowing Him who is superior to reason, subduing the self by the self, slay thou, O mighty-armed, the enemy in the form of desire, hard to conquer.

Thus understanding the Self who is superior to reason, and subduing the self by the self, i.e., steadily composing the self by means of the self,* do thou slay desire. It is difficult to conquer desire, on account of its complex and incomprehensible nature.

How does wisdom destroy sin?—Here is an example :

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥

As kindled fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does wisdom-fire reduce all actions to ashes.

Just as a well-kindled fire reduces fuel to ashes, so does the fire of the wisdom reduce all actions to ashes, i.e., it renders them important. The fire of wisdom cannot indeed literally reduce actions to ashes as fire reduces fuel to ashes. Accordingly we should understand that right knowledge is the

cause which renders all actions impotent. But the actions by which this body has been brought into existence will come to an end only when their effects will have been fully worked out ; for, those actions have already commenced their effects. Thus wisdom can destroy only such actions as have not yet begun to produce their effects, whether they are actions done in this birth before the rise of knowledge and along with knowledge, or those done in the many previous births.

Who is a Sage ?

The realization of inaction in action and *vice versa* is extolled as follows :

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः ।

ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥

He whose engagements are all devoid of desires and purposes, and whose actions have been burnt by the fire of wisdom, him the wise call a sage.

The man who has realized the truth described above, whose works are all free from desires and from purposes (sankalpa) which cause those desires, who performs mere deeds without any immediate purpose,—if he be engaged in wordly action, he does so with a view to set an example to the masses ; if he has renounced wordly life, he performs deeds only for bodily maintenance,—whose actions, good and bad, are consumed in the fire of wisdom which consists in the realization of inaction and *vice versa* : him the wise who know Brahman call a real sage (pandita).

Moreover,

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥

To the devotees who are free from desire and anger, who have controlled their thought, and who have known the Self, Brahman's bliss exists everywhere.

Those who have renounced all actions and attained right knowledge are liberated, whether living or dead.

शनैःशनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥

Little by little let him withdraw, by reason (buddhi) held in firmness; keeping the mind established in the Self, let him not think of anything.

He should make the mind constantly abide in the Self, bearing in mind that the Self is all and that nothing else exists. This * is the highest form of Yoga.

Now, as to the Yogin who thus strives to make the mind abide in the Self,

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥

* The steadiness of mind.—(A.)

By whatever cause the wavering and unsteady mind wanders away, from that let him restrain it and bring it back direct under the control of the Self.

Sound and other objects are the causes which make the mind wander away. It is a natural weakness of the mind to be thus led away by sense-objects. By convincing oneself of the illusoriness of sense-objects through an investigation into their real nature, and by cultivating indifference to worldly objects, the mind can be restrained from sense-objects and brought back to the Self wherein to abide firmly. In virtue of this practice of Yoga, the Yogin's mind attains peace in the Self.

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।

विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥

controlling the senses, mind and intellect, having moksha as his highest goal, free from desire, fear and anger,—the sage who ever (remains thus) is verily liberated.

The sound and other sense-objects enter the mind within through the respective organs. These objects which are external are kept outside when a man does not think of them. A sage (muni) is one who is given to contemplation (manana) and who renounces all actions. Keeping the body in the posture described, he should always look up to moksha as his supreme goal. When the sage leads constantly this kind of life, renouncing all, he is no doubt liberated: he has nothing else to do for liberation.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

The Self abiding in all beings, and all beings (abiding) in the Self, sees he whose self has been made steadfast by Yoga, who everywhere sees the same.

He sees all beings—from Brahma, the Creator, down to a clump of grass—as one with the Self ; and in all the different beings—from Brahma, the Creator, down to inanimate objects—he sees the same ; *i.e.*, he sees that the Self and Brahman (the Absolute) are one.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

Those men who, meditating on Me as non-separate, worship Me all around,—to them who are ever devout, I secure gain and safety.

Those men of renunciation (*samnyasins*) who worship Me all around,* ever meditating on Me, regarding themselves as non-separate,—*i.e.*, looking upon the Supreme God, Narayana, as their own Self,—to these who see the Reality, who are ever devout, † I secure gain. I secure to them what is not already possessed ; and I secure to them *safety*, *i.e.*, preservation of what is already possessed. As said in vii. 17 18, they form My very Self and are dear to Me.

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।

प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥

Of them the wise man, ever steadfast and devoted to the One, excels ; for, excessively dear am I to the wise, and he is dear to Me.

Of the four, the wise man, as knowing the truth, is ever steadfast, and devoted to the One, finding no other object of worship. Thus, he who is devoted to the One is superior to all others. Since I am his very Self, I am excessively dear to the wise man.—It is well-known to all in this world that the Self is dear to every one. Therefore Vasudeva, as the Self of the wise man, is dear to him.—And the wise man is My very Self and is therefore very dear to Me.

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

Satisfaction in the Self.

The Lord said :

When a man, satisfied in the Self alone by himself, completely casts off all the desires of the mind, then is he said to be one of steady knowledge.

When a man completely abandons all the various desires that enter the heart and is satisfied with the True Innermost Self (Pratyagatman) in himself, without longing for external possessions, averse to everything else because of his acquisition of the immortal nectar,—i.e., his realisation of the Supreme Truth,—then he is said to be a wise man (vidvan), one whose knowledge arising from the discrimination of the Self and the not-Self has been steadied. [If, on his abandoning of all desires, nothing should be found to cause satisfac-

tion while the cause of the embodied state still operates, it would follow that his behaviour would be like that of a mad man or a maniac. Hence the words 'satisfied in the Self' etc.] That is to say, he who has abandoned all desires connected with progeny, possessions and the world, who has renounced (all works), who delights in the Self and plays with the Self,—he is the man whose knowledge is steady.

Because it is so, therefore,

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

That man attains peace, who, abandoning all desires, moves about without attachment, without selfishness, without vanity.

That man of renunciation, who, entirely abandoning all desires, goes through life content with the bare necessities of life, who has no attachment even for those bare necessities of life, who regards not as his even those things which are needed for the mere bodily existence, who is not vain of his knowledge,—such a man of steady knowledge, that man who knows Brahman, attains peace (nirvana), the end of all the misery of samsara (mundane existence). In short, becomes the very Brahman.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥

He by whom the world is not afflicted and who is not afflicted by the world, who is free from joy, envy, fear and sorrow, he is dear to Me.

Moreover :

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥

The same in honour and disgrace, the same towards friends and enemies, abandoning all undertakings,—he is said to have crossed beyond the *gunas*.

The same : unaffected. Though neutral from their own standpoint, some appear to others as if they were on the side of friends or on the side of foes ; but this man appears to be same to friends and foes. He renounces all actions, productive of visible and invisible results, except those which are necessary for the bare maintenance of the body.

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥

That man, verily, who rejoices only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone,—for him there is nothing to do.

But that man—a *samnyasin*, the Sankhya, one devoted to Self-knowledge—whose joy is in the Self, not in the objects of the senses ; who is satisfied only with the Self, not with food-essence, etc. ; who is contented in the Self ;—all others derive contentment from possession of external things, whereas, disregarding these, he is content in the Self only and has no desire for anything ;—for such a man, for the man who

knows the Self, there is nothing to do.

Moreover,

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥

For him, there is here no interest whatever in what is done or what is not done. Nor is there in all beings any one he should resort to for any object.

For the man thus rejoicing in the Self, no purpose is served by action.—Does, then, any evil called sin (*pratyavâya*) arise from inaction?—No evil whatever, either by way of incurring sin, or by way of losing the Self, arises in this world from inaction. Nor is there, in all beings from Brahma (*Prajâpati*) down to the *sthâvara* or immovable objects, any whose support he has to gain by action. He has no object whatever to gain, for which he has to depend upon any particular being: if he were to have any object in view, then he would have to exert himself to gain that object.

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वाऽपि न निबद्ध्यते ॥

Satisfied with what comes to him by chance, rising above the pairs of opposites, free from envy, equanimous in success and failure, though acting he is not bound.

He who is satisfied with whatever he may obtain by chance, without his effort or request, who is not affected in

mind by the attack of such pairs of opposite (dvandva) as heat and cold, who cherishes no feelings of envy and jealousy, who is calm whether he obtains or not such things as might come to him without effort,—such a devotee, feeling no pleasure or pain whether he obtains or not food and other things required for the maintenance of the body, seeing action in inaction and *vice versa*, ever steady in his knowledge of the true nature of the Self, always disowning agency—"I do nothing at all, energies act upon energies,"—in all acts of the body, etc., while begging or doing anything else for the bare existence of the body,—thus realizing the non-agency of the Self, he really does no act at all, not even the act of begging. But as he appears to act like the generality of mankind, agency is imputed to him by people, and so far he is the agent in the act of begging and the like. From his own point of view, however, as based on the teaching of the scriptures which are the source of right knowledge, he is no agent at all. Thus, though he performs the act of begging and the like required for the bare existence of the body, and though with reference to these acts agency is imputed to him by others, he is not bound, since action and its cause, which are the source of bondage, have been burnt in the fire of wisdom.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, whirling by Maya all beings (as if) mounted on a machine.

The Lord (Isvara): the Ruler, Narayana. *Arjuna* pure in the internal self, of a pure antah-karana. The word

“ Arjuna ” is used in the sense of ‘ pure ’ in the *Big-Veda*.
“ The dark day and the *light* day.” (6-9-1). He causes all beings to revolve as if—‘ as if ’ being understood—mounted on machines, like wooded dolls mounted on a machine. *By Maya* : by causing illusion. ‘ Whirling ’ should be construed with ‘ dwells,’

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥

Fly unto Him for refuge with all thy being, O Bharata ; by His Grace shalt thou obtain supreme peace (and) the eternal resting place.

Seek thou that Lord as thy sole Refuge with thy whole being for relief from the distress of *samsara*. Then by His Grace, thou shalt obtain supreme peace and attain to My—
i.e., Vishnu’s—Supreme Eternal Abode.

Thus shines
the quintessence of the Gita
consisting of the verses selected
by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

He who, with earnestness and devotion,
studies these verses, forty-two in number,
will easily attain knowledge
imparted by the Gita.